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ABSTRACT

This teacher's packet accompanies a slide presentation on needle arts produced by anonymous women of the latter part of the Choson Dynasty (1392-1910) of Korea. The Choson dynasty, lasting 518 years, was the last period of pre-modern Korean history. It was dominated by Confucian thought and regulations. With its strong patriarchal focus and moralistic philosophy, it was the most rigidly controlled society in Korean history. It was dominated by Confucian thought and regulations. With its strong patriarchal focus and moralistic philosophy, it was the most rigidly controlled society in Korean history. The packet contains: (1) an introductory essay describing the women of the Choson Dynasty with descriptions of textile art, costumes, and pojagi (beautifully decorated cloth squares or rectangles used to cover or wrap temple offerings, wedding gifts and ritual objects for ceremonies); (2) a description of simple color theory used in creating the ceremonial cloths; (3) a listing of suggested activities for classroom use for grades K-12; (4) a glossary of terms and description of embroidery stitches; (5) maps of Korea related to the time period; and (6) a 14-item bibliography of resources; and (7) a slide list describing the art depicted on each slide with time period and dimensions of the piece. (EH)

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# TEACHER'S PACKET

# PROFUSION of COLOR: Korean Costumes and Wrapping Cloths of the Choson Dynasty

## A Teacher Workshop on MARCH 11, 1995

ED 409 234

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# PROFUSION of COLOR:
## Korean Costumes and Wrapping Cloths of the Chosŏn Dynasty

# INTRODUCTION

## WOMEN IN THE CHOSŎN DYNASTY

As we look at the rich variety of examples of needle arts produced by anonymous women of the latter part of the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), we can't help but become curious about who made them. Who were these women and what were their lives like? What were the conditions under which they worked? What was the motivation behind these arts? These questions invite investigation into the position of women in later Korean culture.

The Chosŏn dynasty, which lasted for 518 years, was the last period of pre-modern Korean history. It was dominated by Confucian thought and regulations. With its strong patriarchal focus and moralistic philosophy, it was the most rigidly controlled society in Korean history. Following the Chinese model of Neo-Confucianism, ancestor worship, and the attendant need to establish firm and clear lines of descent to ensure the proper reverence and rituals, was central to the religious, social, and political life of the nation. In this way it was hoped that all issues of succession of leadership, from the individual family hierarchy to the succession of kings, would be clear and uncontested, leading to peace and harmony at home and at large. To this end the lives of both men and women were closely regulated, but women's lives, especially those of royalty and the upper classes, were tightly circumscribed and rigorously controlled entirely for the utility and benefit of this patriarchal society. This was new in a culture which with its nomadic origins had continued to value the rights of the individual and even the rights of women to some extent. In Korea's earliest historical periods there were three instances where queens had inherited the throne and ruled in their own right.

In addition to its insistence on following rules and regulation, Chu Hsi's Neo-Confucianism was strongly moralistic, with a particular bias against the passions, creativity, and religious fervor of women. One of the first issues dealt with in the early Chosŏn dynasty of the fifteenth century was "to rectify the womanly way" in a desire to confine women to the domestic sphere. In 1404 the government forbade women to visit Buddhist temples except for family memorial services. Soon thereafter they were also banned under punishment of lashing from visits to shamans and to the mountains. Because this was so opposed to the previous practices and the natural inclination of Korean women, the policy was often violated until it was decreed that the men who allowed their women to disobey the rule would themselves be held responsible (Deuchler, p. 260).

In this way, the Confucian censors created a patriarchal society in which male prerogatives determined all social roles and interactions. Women were to follow the Principle of the Three



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Obediences: obedience to her father before marriage, obedience to her husband after marriage, and obedience to her son after her husband's death. The rules were most confining to women of the upper classes. From as young as age seven, girls were confined with their adult female relatives to the inner rooms of the house. Only men and boys were allowed to freely move in the outer world and occupy the front rooms of the house. Women could leave their quarters only with the permission of their father, husband, or in-laws, to attend important ceremonies, to visit their family, or on a once-a -year outing to view the spring flowers with other women of equal rank.

Women were very important socially and politically for the credentials they brought to a man in marriage. It was only through marriage to a woman from a good family that a man's sons, and especially the first son, bore the proper bloodline to carry on the lineage, the inheritance, and even the right to take the examinations for government service. Thus the proper wife legitimized a man and his son. For this she was valued, not for herself or even for the dowry she might bring. A son born to a lower class mother was not eligible to carry on the family lineage or receive the inheritance. The importance of the woman's bloodline descended from ancient custom in Korea, where in earlier days women were empowered to rule in their own name if they were in line by blood and were capable.

Another remnant of the older value of women was the continuation of the wedding custom of induction of the groom into the bride's house. This, in spite of repeated efforts by the Confucian censors to have it reversed, so the groom would take the bride to his house for the wedding ceremony. In practice it was sometimes years after the wedding, and repeated visits by the groom to the bride's house, that she finally was removed to his house. After being formally presented to his parents and then to the shrine of his ancestors, she at last became a member of his family and lineage, giving up her own.

Because the role of women was to obey and serve these men in her life, they received no formal education. As stated in the sixteenth century treatise, "The Admonition to Women of the Inner Court," attributed to Yi Hwang:

> Ladies should be able to compose poems, do calligraphy, read the History, Lesser Learning and Admonitions to Ladies, and be able to recognize the names of kings and ancestors. However, the excessive skills in writing or brilliancy in poetry is rather like [*kisaeng*], and not what is expected of well-born ladies" (Yi, p. 13).

Nevertheless, some upper-class women were well educated by the men and even older women in their families, often "over-the-shoulder" of their brothers. For the entire 518 years of the dynasty, however, only seventeen women of talent in painting or poetry have been recorded and only five are represented by extant works. The assumption that there must have been many more whose talents were known only to their immediate circle of family and never recorded has recently been verified. Scholars now know of some unpublished works of poetry written by mothers and grandmothers (also some fathers) recording words of wisdom and advice on how to behave and to cope, which were given to the daughters when they were sent off to their new home in marriage (Kim, Kichung, p. 21-22).

The talented Sin Saimdang (1504-51), born into a family of scholars, was encouraged to develop her talents as a painter and poet. Only two of her poems remain; perhaps as a proper wife and mother, she kept her talents hidden. In one poem she speaks of her home-sickness and her longing to see her aging mother again:

Leaving behind my aged mother at
home
My heart aches on this lonely
journey to Seoul.
Looking back toward Pukch'on far
away
I see the white clouds drifting
above a mountain in twilight.

My home is one thousand *li* away
over mountains one upon
another.
But I yearn to go back day and
night,
in sleep or awake.

The solitary moon over
Hansongjong pavilion,
A streak of wind past Kyongp'odae
beach,
Seagulls scatter from the sand
and again gather together.
Fishing boats sail in and out on the
sea.
When could I ever again tread
the path to Kangnung
To sit beside my mother and sew
with her?
(quoted in Kim, Kichung,
p.18)

A few works produced by the *kisaeng*, low-class women who were trained to serve as entertainers for men, have been preserved. These songs are often filled with heartache, loneliness, and bitterness (*han*). Unlike the *yangban*, or upper-class women, whom they were allowed to emulate in dress and hair style, the *kisaeng* were trained to socialize with the men, going on picnics, singing, painting, and writing poetry as well as entertaining them through the night. They often fell hopelessly in love with the gentlemen. Their pain was that they were not permitted to marry or bear the children of their lovers. Educated, talented, and often beautiful, these women were only there to serve and be left. Singing of love and loneliness, the *kisaeng* Hwang Chini wrote:

Blue mountains speak of my
desire,
Green waters reflect my Lover's
love:
The mountains unchanging,
The waters flowing by.
Sometimes it seems the waters
cannot forget me,
They part in tears, regretting,
running away.
(quoted in Lee, p. 4)

The proper education for women was in the domestic arts, the running of a household, cooking, raising children, weaving, and sewing. There she might be allowed to flower if her relationship with her in-laws was harmonious. In the extended families that comprised many households, the tensions between the women were often high. A new bride had to negotiate carefully to find her place and keep her voice. Within the established Confucian order of things, peace and harmony were expected theoretically but were not necessarily the reality. Personalities often clashed, jealousies arose, and demands were not always easily met. One likes to hope that parents loved their children and tried to arrange compatible marriages for them, and that consequently many families were happy. However, it seems that even when a given couple was well matched, the complex relationships with other family members left little hope for a truly fulfilling life.

# TEXTILES, COSTUMES, AND WRAPPING CLOTHS

## TEXTILES

The textile arts were practiced within the context of the family. In the early part of the Chosŏn dynasty most women still wove the fabric as well as made the clothes, decorated them with embroidery, and created wrapping cloths from the scraps. (In the nineteenth century, machinery began to replace hand looms.) Weaving and sewing were necessary and valued tasks in the society and so invested women with prestige and pride as well as affording many of them great pleasure. The seven tools of sewing were traditionally said to be a woman's closest companions: her ruler, scissors, needle, thread, thimble, and small and large irons. This may have been especially true in the Chosŏn period, when women were confined to home and the domestic arts. The attachment women felt for these "companions" was voiced by an anonymous woman in her short essay, "Lament for a Needle:"

> How regrettable, my needle, how pitiful! You were a special gift of fine quality, a thing out of the ordinary, prominent among ironware. Deft and swift like some knight-errant, straight and true like a loyal subject, your sharp point seemed to talk, your round eye seemed to see. When I embroidered phoenixes and peacocks on thick silk or thin, your wondrously agile movements seemed the workings of a spirit. No human effort could have matched you.
> (quoted in Kim, Kumja, p.25)

Women of the family did many of these tasks collectively and with the help of servants and slaves. Silk worms were raised, the cocoons gathered and boiled to release the threads which were then spun into fine thread and woven. Plain weaves were light weight and acquired a lovely sheen after being glossed by fulling, a process where fabric starched with rice water was beaten with wooden paddles against a wooden roller (Suk, p. 33). Satin and gauze weaves often included self-patterned, or damask, designs. For certain court robes, patterns of dragons and phoenixes were woven in with gold thread. Several people would be needed to operate the looms for the self-patterned silks; while one worked the shuttle others would adjust the warp threads to create the pattern. Royalty and *yangban* wore the heavier silks in winter and lightweight silk or fine ramie clothing in summer.

Ramie, hemp, and flax were grown for their fiber in Korea. The women stripped the stalks and broke apart the fibers which they then twisted together with their hands against their thighs. The thread was woven into airy gauze which was popular for summer clothing and was also made into wrapping cloths used to store textiles, clothing, and bedding. Hemp in its rougher heavier form was also used for funeral dress as an act of penance (Suk, p. 28).

Cotton was introduced to Korea from China at the end of the Koryo dynasty by a minister who had served in China. Seeds that he brought back were planted and soon cotton was a major fiber crop in Korea. After the cotton balls were gathered they were beaten by a tool with a vibrating string which broke apart the fibers, which were then spun into thread. The woven fabric was yellowish and had to be boiled in lye and bleached in the sun to become the pristine white that was favored. Cotton was worn by commoners, especially of

the lower classes, in the winter. They all wore cool ramie or hemp in the summer (Suk, pp. 32-33). Wrapping cloths that were painted, and also many that were embroidered, were made of cotton, either white or dyed.

While women were responsible for aspects of textile manufacture and use in the early part of the dynasty, by the late nineteenth century most fabric was factory made and purchased. The women still designed, cut, and constructed the garments, and lovingly created vibrant *pojagi*, wrapping cloths, out of the scraps.

## COSTUMES

Koreans were referred to as "the people who wore white." Yet color also played an important part in their clothing and their lives. Costumes that have been treasured and handed down over the generations are rich with color in fabric and embellishment. These were the special costumes worn for ceremonial occasions, and illustrate perfectly the Korean saying, "Clothes for men are like wings for birds"(Suk, p. 27).

In genre paintings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, we observe that the gentlemen are clothed in white jackets and pants while the women, when they appear, are more colorfully attired. (slide 1) The everyday dress of men and women of the Chosŏn period and earlier, the *hanbok*, was comprised of two parts: the *chŏgori*, or jacket or blouse, and the *ch'ima*, or skirt for women and the *paji*, or trousers, for men. This costume harks back to the earliest periods of Korean history where examples can be found in murals of the "Tomb of the Dancing Figures" from the northern Koguryo kingdom. There the jackets have the same narrow sleeves and are all longer than Chosŏn style, hanging well below the belted waist. During the Chosŏn dynasty the length of the women's jacket in particular became very short, hanging barely to the bust line. In the Three Kingdoms period, women's skirts were pleated rather than gathered and billowing as in the Chosŏn dynasty (slides 1 and 2).

During the Chosŏn dynasty, gentlemen wore a long coat and black horsehair hat when they went out. Upper-class women seldom went out. When they did, the royalty were confined to closed palanquins, but other women of the official class might go out with a wide brimmed hat and encircling veil, which was to be kept closed at all times.

For certain official, ritual, and ceremonial occasions brilliant colors were not only enjoyed but required. Confucian hierarchy regulated the cut, color, and ornamentation of dress for the different classes of society and ranks of officialdom and royalty. The full, flowing robes with long wide sleeves were adopted from Chinese styles. Ministers of the court wore red and blue robes with black trim, a red apron, and an embroidered panel indicating rank whenever they presented themselves in audiences with the king or attended auspicious ceremonial occasions.

The color of wedding and ceremonial robes, called *wŏnsam*, of the royal family were strictly regulated by the



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Confucian censors in an endeavor to clarify and enforce distinctions of rank. Early in the dynasty the queen wore red, but later she wore a yellow robe with blue borders and lined with crimson. The sleeves had red and blue stripes and wide white bands at the end. The crown princess wore red; purple was reserved for the king's secondary wives and consorts. The other princesses and wives of the court officials wore a brilliant pale green robe lined in pink. The stripes on the sleeves were red, blue, yellow, pink, green, and red repeated. Again the sleeves terminated in a broad white band. A wide red sash with self-patterned gold designs, or more commonly pressed gold patterns, was tied high just below the breast line, in the Mongolian style. The long wide sleeves were adopted from Chinese styles during the Han dynasty. Robes of this style and color are still worn by brides all over Korea, both for the wedding and also when they are presented formally to their parents-in-law. Alternately, the bride could choose the *hwarrot*, or "flower robe," a red robe with dark blue lining richly embroidered with auspicious flowers, birds, and Chinese characters (slide 3).

Illustration of Korean shamanist ritual

Another group of robes was designed and made for the male and female shamans, practitioners of the ancient indigenous religion which had remained viable by incorporating aspects of all the other religions as they were being introduced into Korea: Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and in later years even Christianity (Kim and Sturm, p. 41). Shamans wore a wide range of costumes to impersonate and invoke the different gods during a *kut*, the full ritual of summoning and receiving messages from the gods. Often beginning with the white robes of a Buddhist nun, the ritual would progress to personification of military protectors wearing a black-vested, narrow-sleeved robe (slide 4). At times the shaman would scoop up armloads of robes and swirl them around together in a riot of flapping color. "The extensive wardrobe, vibrant colors, and sheen of the beautiful Korean flaxen and silken robes, intoxicate the eye" (King, p. 11).

Clothing is worn for warmth, protection, and modesty, also importantly for presentation. How we dress says a lot about how we see ourselves and want to be seen, and also how society wants us to be seen. There are uniforms for certain occupations and special forms of dress are expected for ritual occasions. This was particularly true in Korea during the Chosŏn dynasty. The establishment of a formal dress code, it was believed, would reestablish proper order in society. In reaction to the loose standards of the previous Koryŏ period, the new Confucian regime instituted regulations that made a person's status, rank, and function in society clearly visible as the outer manifestation of the harmoniously ordered society reflective of the harmony of the universe. Privilege, responsibility, and duty were valued over individual nature. That the society be ordered to reflect the order of the universe was of utmost importance in a Confucian system of government. Ceremonies marking the progress of the seasons and important moments of social and individual lives, such as court ceremonies, weddings, and funerals were properly solemnized by appropriate attire.

## POJAGI

In a similar fashion, the correct presentation of gifts, offerings, and hospitality was also important within this ritualistic society. *Pojagi* answered this need. Cloth squares or rectangles, beautifully made and decorated were used to cover or wrap offerings for a temple, gifts for weddings, and ritual objects for ceremonies. They covered food trays and tables, and wrapped clothing, bedding, and jewelry for safe keeping. ". . .wrapping an object represented not only an individual's concern for that which was being wrapped, but also respect for its receiver. There was an unspoken folk belief that by wrapping an object, *pok* (good fortune) could be enclosed or captured within a *pojagi*" (Kim, Kumja, p. 28). To meet the multitude of uses, *pojagi* of were made in a wide variety of sizes, shapes, and style. They have been classified into numerous categories, some of them overlapping.

First they are divided between those made for the palace, called *kung po*, and those made for and by commoners, called *min po*. Many elegant *kung po* were made of exquisitely woven silks, both patterned and unpatterned. When embroidered they are referred to as *su po* (slides 5 and 6), when decorated with pressed gold patterns they are *kŭmbak po*. Another group, *tangch'ae po* were hand painted with auspicious symbols on fine cotton (slide 8).

*Pojagi* can also be identified by their function. *Pojagi* designed to present gifts to the groom's family by the bride's family are called *yedan po*, for example. They are usually embroidered with symbolic wishes for happiness and good fortune.

*Min po*, made by and for commoners, were made of silk, cotton, ramie, hemp, or linen to suit many different needs. Pieces with lively embroidered designs, *su po*, bearing wishes for happiness, abundance, and good fortune were made for the exchange of gifts and ritual objects in connection with marriages. Some were *yemul po* and served to present the betrothal contract to the bride's family and gifts of silk and threads to the bride, or they wrapped gifts exchanged between bride and groom. Others, called *yedan po*, wrapped return gifts from the bride's family to the family of the groom (slides 9 and 11). At the time of the ceremony, the groom's family presented the bride's family with a wooden goose—a carry-over from the real wild goose or other wild animal that had been given in more ancient times—representing a promise of conjugal love and fidelity. Wrapped in its embroidered *kirŏgi po*, it took its place on the wedding table with other offerings. If the time between the marriage and the bride's removal to the groom's household was a long one, which they frequently were due to the desire of families to secure a good marriage alliance as soon as possible, there might be many more exchanges of gifts before this journey.

There is an especially joyous quality to these wrapping cloths associated with weddings. They are filled with embroidered designs representing fertility, good fortune, happiness and honor. Patterns for the designs were sometimes printed on or cut out of paper and basted onto the cloth. The women stitched right over the paper which added padding to the design. Perforations created by the needle would make it easy to remove any excess paper. Satin stitch, parallel stitches to fill in an area, and couching, looping over a heavy, usually metallic thread to hold it onto the cloth, were the most common stitches. In designing these, the women artists from among the ranks of commoners, were free to use arbitrary and unnatural color schemes, abstracted forms, and an irregular disposition of objects, in

contrast to the makers of the palace pieces whose designs were more naturalistic and formal. Being a little removed from official Confucian scrutiny these reflect more of the spontaneous, direct, uncanny Korean aesthetic.

While embroidered *pojagi* were made by both royalty and commoner, another type was made and used only by commoners. *Chogak po*, or patchwork *pojagi* were composed from scraps of cloth saved from making clothing. New clothes were ritually made for New Year's and Ch'usok celebrations, guaranteeing a continuous supply of pieces. Saving, and reusing them was encouraged by the womanly Confucian virtues of diligence, chastity, and frugality. The artful reuse of these scraps was one way women could be both creative and frugal. It must have given them great delight to play with the brilliant, glossy silks and muted gauzes, to sort, select, and arrange the pieces into patterns. One wonders if they did not also endow these *pojagi*, which had been made from the fragments of cloth that had been used for their family's clothing, with a sentimental association.

Depending on the designated use, patchwork *pojagi* were constructed of different kinds of fabric. *Sang po*, designed to cover food trays or tables (slide 12) to keep food warm and protected from insects and dust as the food was carried from the kitchen in the women's quarters to the men's quarters, were usually made of silk, sometimes lined with oiled paper. These square cloths with a tuft, loop, or handle for lifting, usually had centered, geometrically based designs of stripes, concentric squares, rotating squares or diamonds, or checkerboards (slide 13). Occasionally they were embellished with embroidery. If they were padded, as they sometimes were, exquisite little knots were symmetrically placed where different pieces adjoined, to hold the padding in place.

Silk pieces were also used for wrappers for personal ornaments (slide 15) and even wedding gifts (slide 14). Color was a major consideration in the design of these *pojagi*. Working with pieces that might have been collected over a period of years, the women had a large palette to choose from. Contrasting colors were used, particularly the symbolic colors red and blue, often with yellow and pale green. Most are primary or secondary colors in various shades or tints, but seldom grayed. Some compositions used color symmetrically, creating static orderly patterns, while others were more dynamically designed with balanced colors. (cf. slides 15 and 16) A few larger wrapping cloths of light weight gauzy self-patterned silk used small rectangles, primarily of pale grays and white, with brilliant colors scattered in an irregular, asymmetrical, but balanced composition (slide 17).

Several kinds of *pojagi* were made of loosely woven ramie, hemp, and or linen. They were used for wrapping and storing household goods. Those made for wrapping clothing are called *oppo*, those for bedding, *yibul po*, and for fabric *ch'on po*. The colors of these were more subtle, grayed, and close in tonality. The patchwork designs were also subtle. Using mostly rectilinear forms, many have a sense of centrality but the symmetry of framing around the central area is soon broken by wider or longer pieces on one side or another and by changes in color tonality. Huh Dong-hwa, the collector of these *pojagi*, tells a story of asking one of the village women who made ramie *pojagi* what she thought of while making one. She replied, "Well, don't you think this pojagi looks like a map of my village?" (Huh, p. 36). The village was her universe and its geometry her inspiration. At times, asymmetrical accents of one or more contrasting color will give added punch and interest to the design. Rectangles are often divided into two trapezoids or triangles adding the

dynamic rhythm of weak diagonals slanting one way or the other. Where the color is fairly uniform a contrasting element might come in the form of an extra small unit or sliver of cloth. While for some artists, shape and line were the primary tools in designing this type of wrapper, others used color to extraordinary effect (slide 19).

The freest of the pojagi are totally inexplicable (slide 20). The artist appears to have opened herself up to the deep well of intuitive creative energy. Color and form seem to follow no rules, but speak to us with an exhilarating ah-ha! In the words of Paul Klee, "Art does not render the visible; rather it makes visible" (Chipp, p. 186; 15 quoted in Jansen).

## CONCLUSION

Fortunately for the women and for us, the making of pojagi, both embroidered and patchwork, allowed the creativity of these women to flow forth unhampered by the strict regimens of Confucian ideology or the tyranny of Chinese culture. Whereas talented poets and painters were often thwarted in their creative expression, those women who liked to sew and had a talent for working more abstractly with line, form and color found a vital and acceptable vehicle to set their spirits free.

Although the lives of the women of the Choson dynasty in Korea were highly regulated and tightly circumscribed, there were areas where they could find pleasure and self fulfillment. Some may have had the opportunity and inclination to develop their managerial talents in running the household, especially when they became the mothers-in-law. Others who were artistically inclined found an outlet for their creativity in the textile arts for which they were responsible. Intellectually gifted women were sometimes inspired and encouraged by their parents and perhaps even by a husband of like mind. While they may not have become published or otherwise publicly acknowledged in their own right, there are cases where they became known as the teachers of sons who became famous. Many may have happily acquiesced to their role of obedience and service; the spiritually resourceful, domestically creative, pragmatic, self-disciplined, or natural born peacemakers. For those who didn't, though, there was no recourse; they were forced to endure the lives of loneliness, frustration, and bitterness we can glimpse in the few poems that have come down to us.

# SIMPLE COLOR THEORY

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## Basic Defintions

*hue* : the name of a pure color
*value*: the lightness or darkness of a color
*intensity*: the brightness or dullness of a color (its saturation)

## Mixing Colors

- There are three *primary* colors:
  red, yellow, and blue.
  All other colors are derived from them.
- Mixing two primary colors together results in a *secondary* color:
  orange, green, and violet
- Mixing a primary color with a secondary color, gets a third group of colors,
  the *tertiary* colors:
  red-orange, yellow-green, blue-green, blue-violet, and red-violet.
- In tempera paint, mixing all three of the primary colors in varying amounts creates *grays*, more commonly known as *browns*.

## The Color Wheel

A color wheel places colors in a chart so that the color relationships can be easily understood. The color wheel becomes a tool and a reference guide for mixing colors.

## Mixing Values

*Value* is the lightness or darkness of a color. On the color wheel, yellow is the lightest color, while violet is the darkest. The colors change in value and become lighter as they move from purple to yellow. They become darker when they move from yellow to purple.

## Mixing Tints, Tones and Shades in Tempera Paint

Color is the phenomenon of light. Without light there is no color.
On the value scale from white to black, white is considered light and black is dark, or the absence of light, therefore the absence of color.

By mixing white and black together in differing amounts, we get a variety of grays known as the *value scale*.

In tempera paint, to get a *tint* of a color, add that color to white.
In tempera paint, to get a *shade* of a color, add black to that color.
In tempera paint, to get a *tone* of a color, add gray to that color.



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## Color Schemes

A painting made up of only white, black, and different values of gray is known as *achromatic*.

A painting using only one color in tints, tones, and shades along with various intensities is know as *monochromatic*.

Colors close to each other on the color wheel, resembling one another and yet slightly different is known as *analogous*.

## Graying Colors Naturally

Mixing *direct complements*: for example, to gray orange by direct complement, add blue (the complementary color to orange, the color directly across the color wheel from orange).

Mixing *split complements*, the colors on each side of a color's direct complement: for example, to gray orange by split complements, add on each side of blue, which are blue-green and blue-violet.

Mixing *triads*, any three colors that are equally spaced on the wheel from one another: for example, to gray orange, add green and violet.

## Warm and Cool Colors

Colors affect us in many ways both psychologically and culturally. For the beginner, the simplest dichotomy to understand is the warm and cool feelings that can be generated by colors. Generally, colors in the family of red to yellow are considered to be warm colors (red-violet, red, red-orange, yellow orange, and yellow). Colors in the green and blue families are considered to be cool: yellow-green, green, blue-green, blue, blue-violet, and violet.

# COMPOSITION THEORY

## Composition with Color

It is an essential point that the effect of a color is determined by its situation relative to accompanying colors. A color is always to be seen in relation to its surroundings. The farther a hue is removed form a given hue in the color circle, the greater its power of contrast. . . Quality and quantity of extension are contributing factors. (Birren, p.91)

Human vision is such that we tend to join like to lide, and see them jointly. The likenesses may be of colors, areas, shades, textures or accents. The eye tends to put like colors together, so that when the colors are many, several simltaneous patterns may coexist. (Birren, p. 92)

## Composition with Lines of Direction

Horizontal denotes weight, distance, and breadth.

Vertical, the strongest antithesis to horizontal, denotes lightness, height, and depth. The two directions together give an effect of area, a feeling of equilibrium, and solidity

Diagonal directions are dynamic because they generate movement and imply tension.

The center of the composition is the "center of attention." It is the place of greatest attraction.



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# PROFUSION of COLOR:
## Korean Costumes and Wrapping Cloths of the Chosŏn Dynasty

# SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

## GENERAL QUESTIONS FOR SLIDE DISCUSSION

### FOR COSTUMES:

1 Questions to assess their reaction:

Do you like this design? What do you like about it? not like about it?
How would it make you feel to wear this costume?
Do they remind you of anything else you have or have not seen?

2. Questions to sharpen observations and gather data:

What do you notice? What else?
How heavy would this be to wear?
How many colors do you see? Is color important in this garment?
How was the garment decorated?

3. Questions to summarize information:

What have you discovered looking at these costumes?
What do you like about them?
What have you learned about Korea? about yourself?

### FOR POJAGI

1. Questions/Activities to elicit their reaction to the works of art:

Would you like to receive a gift wrapped in this?
Do you ever wrap things in cloth?
What kind of things might you think of wrapping in cloth or cloth bags?

2. Questions/Activities to gather data and facts:

**Embroidered *pojagi***

Find birds and butterflies
How many do you see?
Are they naturalistic or stylized?

Look at the shapes and the coloring.
Is it easier to recognize object by their shape or their color?

Can you find any writing?
Does anyone know what it says?



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Do you ever use wrapping paper with words on it?
When? What does it say?
What kinds of messages might be on these wrappers?

Compare the queen's *su po* (slide 5) and the wedding gift wrapper (slide 9)
On which one are the forms more naturalistic?
How have the two different artist's used color?
Which do you like best?

## Patchwork *pojagi*

What shapes do you see?
What colors do you see? How many colors are there?
Are they harmonious or contrasting?
Is the design symmetrical? Is there an obvious center?
How did the artist create either a static quality or dynamic one?
What kinds of shapes or lines create a static feeling?
What kinds of shapes and lines create a dynamic quality?
Is the pattern regular or irregular?
If it is irregular, do you think it is balanced?

3. Questions/activities to summarize and assess the *pojagi* they have seen and discussed:

Compare and contrast two *pojagi* of similar types, or of different types:
Discuss the different ways they were constructed.
What materials are they made of?
What were they used for?
Which one is more effective as an article of presentation?
How much time would it have taken to make them?

Notice which designs feel more restful, which ones keep your eye moving around?
Which is the most cheerful? the most dignified? the most interesting?
Why?
Which *pojagi* would you like to receive as a gift from a friend?
How do you think the women felt when they made these *pojagi*?
What did you find out about the women who made them?
What do you want to know?
How might you find out?

## MAKING A *POJAGI*

### Questions for Review and Inspiration:

- If you had lots of pieces of cloth to work with how would you set about designing and constructing a wrapping cloth?
- Which kind of design would you like to make? Do you think it would be easier for you to make a regular or irregular design?
- Would you like to work with large or small pieces? or a combintation of both?
- What kind of colors would you like to use? primary colors? secondary and tertiary colors? bright colors? dim colors? light colors? dark colors? contrasting colors? or colors close in value or hue?
- How many colors would you like to use? few? or many?
- If you were going to make a *pojagi* would you like to work alone or with friends?
- Do you think it would be a good idea to use wrapping cloths for gift giving?
- What would be the advantages? for you, for your friends, for the environment? What would be the disadvantages?

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

Prepared by Kelly Carlisle, MFA.

### GRADES K-4

**show and discuss** images of *pojagi* in relation to shape and color and their various uses
**color and/or cut** paper cardboard squares, rectangles, and triangles
**create** on either paper or medium weight cardboard your own *pojagi* design
**choose** someone to give your *pojagi* to
This exercise stresses hands-on involvement with color identification and shape configurations; develops dexterity with the handling of tools such as scissors, paint brush, or coloring implement; and confirms the identity of various geometric shapes.

### GRADES 5-8

**understand** — hue, saturation, value, tint, and shade and color contrasts of light and dark, warm and cool, and opposite or complementary colors.
**make studies** — of proposed design and then create a *pojagi*
**consider** — color choices and shapes for either regular or irregular design
**execute** — your design as you desire:

- **cut, arrange, and paste** — colored paper
- **paint and arrange** — paper, wood, clay tiles
- **sew** — fabric deciding on the color of thread to be used, matching or contrasting
- **add** — embroidery, tassels, or knots as desired
- **weave** — fibers such as yarns, threads, paper, dried vegetation, or wire then
- **cut and glue or stitch** onto backing



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## GRADES 9-12

**understand** — hue, saturation, value, tint, shade, ând texture color contrasts of dark and light, bright (saturated) and dull (diluted), warm and cool, complementary colors, and contrast by extenstion (much and little)

**make studies** — of proposed design and then create a *pojagi* pojagi-like design

**consider** — shapes and color choices for a regular and symmetrical or irregular, "crazy quilt" design

**execute** — as desired:

- **paint** — on canvas, clay, fabric, paper, or wood
- **cut and paste** — colored paper, perhaps changing your plan as you work.
- **cut and stitch** — fabric using thread the color of your choice

**research** — an artist using bibliographical and artistic references from this outline and relate these Western ideas to *pojagi* design.

**reveal and explain** — your research by creating a two dimensional design which relates directly or indirectly to a *pojagi* design.

## MODERN WESTERN ARTISTS AND THEIR WORK AS RELATING TO KOREAN POJAGI

Hans Arp, *Collage with Squares Arranged According to the Laws of Chance*. 1916-17. Janson, *The History of Art*, p. 693.

Josef Albers, *Homage to the Square*. 1961. Hunter, et. al., *Modern Art*, p. 244.

Mark Rothko, *Earth and Green*. 1955. Janson, *The History of Art*, color plate 148.

Paul Klee, *Individualized Altimetry of Stripes*. 1930. Hunter, et al., *Modern Art*, p. 123.

Piet Mondrian, *Broadway Boogie-Woogie*. 1942-43. Hunter, et al., *Modern Art*, p. 162.

Roger Bissiere, *The Forest*. 1955. Hunter, et al., *Modern Art*, p. 285.

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**PROFUSION of COLOR:**
**Korean Costumes and Wrapping Cloths of the Chosŏn Dynasty**

# GLOSSARY

## Clothing

| | |
|---|---|
| *ch'ima* | woman's full billowing skirt |
| *chŏgori* | woman's blouse or jacket |
| *hanbok* | basic Korean costume |
| *hwarrot* | bridal robe |

## Wrapping Cloths (*Pojagi*)

**a. by rank:**

| | |
|---|---|
| *kung po* | wrapping cloths for palace use |
| *min po* | wrapping cloths for commoners |

**b. by type of construction:**

| | |
|---|---|
| *chogak po* | patchwork wrapping cloth |
| *hot po* | single layered wrapping cloth |
| *kyop* | lined wrapping cloth |
| *kumbak po* | cloth with designs of pressed gold |
| *nubi po* | quilted wrapping cloth |
| *sam po* | wrapping cloth padded with cotton |
| *su po* | embroidered wrapping cloth |
| *tangch'ae po* | painted wrapping cloth |

**c. by use:**

| | |
|---|---|
| *kirŏgi po* | cloth wrapping for a wooden goose or duck used in the wedding ceremony |
| *norigae po* | cloth wrapping for small, personal ornaments |
| *oppo* | cloth wrapping for textiles or clothing, usually made with thin, gauzy silk or ramie |
| *pach'im po* | cloth wrapping to cover table or tray |
| *sikji po* | oiled paper covering for food |
| *sang po* | cloth wrapping for covering food table or tray |
| *yedan po* | cloth wrapping for gifts from the bride's family to the groom's family |
| *yemul po* | cloth wrapping for gifts from the groom's family to the bride's family or gifts between the bride and groom. |
| *yibul* | cloth wrapping for bedding, usually made of thin silk (*sa*), hemp (*sambe*), and/or linen (*pe*) |



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## Kinds of Material

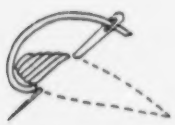
| | |
|---|---|
| *hangna* | thin, finely woven silk |
| *moshi* | ramie, plant fiber similar to hemp |
| *myŏn* | cotton |
| *myŏngju* | unpatterned silk |
| *pe* | linen |
| *sa* | silk with self patterned designs, damask |
| *sambe* | hemp |
| *tan* | heavy, satin-weave silk, often with self patterned designs |
| *yuji* | oiled paper |

Prepared by Richard L. Mellott, Curator of Education, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

# EMBROIDERY STITCHES

Just as an understanding of how an etching is made helps one to appreciate the high degree of technical skill required to make a fine print, so too does learning how embroidered stitches are worked provide an essential foundation for approaching the art of embroidery. Of course, it is not necessary to examine and identify each stitch on a fine Chinese court robe to be impressed by the refinement and quality of the garment, but those who take the time to learn the basic nine or ten stitches commonly found on East Asian textiles will find looking at the pieces . . . a more rewarding experience.

The following brief explanations of the most common embroidered stitches found on textiles in East Asia are arranged more or less in order of popularity. In brackets following the stitch name are some of the terms by which it is known in the West. This list, by no means exhaustive, is included for those viewers who are more familiar with Western terminology. The Chinese name is given in parentheses.



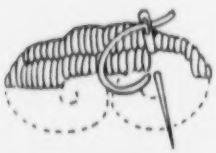
basic satin stitch

1. **Satin stitch** (*ping*). The earliest traces of satin stitch embroidery in Asia were found adhered to the patina of a bronze wine vessel (*zhi*) dating to the Anyang period (1300-1027 B.C.) and are now housed in the Malmo Museum in Sweden.

The basic satin stitch is fairly simple, but is difficult to do correctly and neatly. The thread is carried across the space to be filled and returned underneath the material to the starting point. Since the desired effect is to make the embroidered surface look like satin, the stitches must be placed side by side as evenly and closely together as possible.

sham satin stitch

When economy of thread is required, a **sham satin stitch** is employed. Instead of continuing the stitch underneath the material to the starting point, the needled picks up a small piece of fabric, and the thread is returned across the surface to the starting point.



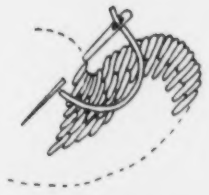
encroaching satin stitch

To create a gradual color transition across a segment of design, the **encroaching stain stitch** (*qiang*) is used. The first row is done in one color, and the second row, with the head of each stitch inserted between the base of the two stitches of the row above, is done in a contrasting color. In this way the lines appear to be almost woven into each other.



20

The **long and short stitch** [embroidery stitch, featherwork or *opus plumarium*, plumage stitch, irish stitch, shading stitch, tapestry shading stitch, leaf stitch] (*chan*) is one of the most familiar and useful of all stitches. It is worked exactly like the ordinary satin stitch and derives its name from the alternating long and short stitches made in the first row only; all subsequent rows have stitches of the same length. Typically none of the individual stitches show; rather, the finished surface appears unbroken and smooth. Usually employed to shade colors across a small area, the long and short stitch was very popular throughout East Asia.



long and short stitch

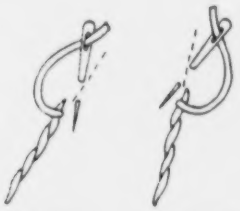
2. **Back stitch** [stitching, point de sable] (*hui*) Back stitches are usually used for line work, such as making stems of plants, or for outlines around an embroidered or appliquéed design.

The needle is first brought out a short distance from the beginning of the line to be covered. (See the arrow in the diagram.) The needle is inserted again at the beginning of the line, thus taking a step "back," and emerges an equal distance beyond the point where it first started. When pulled through, the needle is ready for the second stitch.

back stitch

3. **Stem stitch and outline stitch** [crewel stitch, stalk stitch] (*xian wen*). Both of these stitches are used in making lines, often instead of the simpler back stitch.

This stitch is done like the back stitch except that the needle comes out halfway along and just beside the stitch instead of emerging beyond the point where the stitch first started. The thread is always kept on the same side of the needle. If the thread is kept to the left it is a stem stitch, and if the thread is to the right it is an outline stitch.



outline stitch stem stitch

4. **Couching stitch** [convent stitch, kloster stitch] (*ding*). This stitch is used on a number of occasions when the specific quality of a couched thread is desired in the design, when the main thread would be damaged if pulled through the ground material, or if the main thread were too thick to pull through the ground. Gold- or silver-wrapped threads and twisted threads are the most commonly encountered threads found in East Asian embroideries.

A main thread of any thickness is laid in the desired pattern on the fabric surface. The thread is held in place by the couching stitch, typically of a very fine thread, which passes from the back of the material across the laid thread at regular right angles and back through the material.

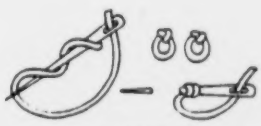
The thread used for the couching stitch can be of any color; it is nearly invisible when the came color as the ground but can create a dramatic design element when a contrasting color is used.

couching stitch

5. **Seed knot** [chinese knot, pekin or peking knot, knotted stitch, twisted knot stitch] (*da zi*). Seed knots have been discovered in China on textiles dating to the Eastern Han dynasty (A.D. 23-220), and it is believed they may have been used even earlier. These small knots ate generally used as filler in areas where a precise color or texture is desired, as in flower petals and stamens, or in depicting garments on figures..

To make a seed knot, the needle is brought up through the fabric where the knot is desired; the thread is held tautly and twisted two or three times around the needle, which is reinserted into the fabric as close as possible to where it emerged.

(French knots are frequently mistaken for seed knots, but they are not the same. The seed knot is flatter, more shapely, and not as twisted or tightly pulled as the french knot.)



seed knot

# PROFUSION of COLOR:
## Korean Costumes and Wrapping Cloths of the Chosŏn Dynasty

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OUTLINE MAP OF KOREA

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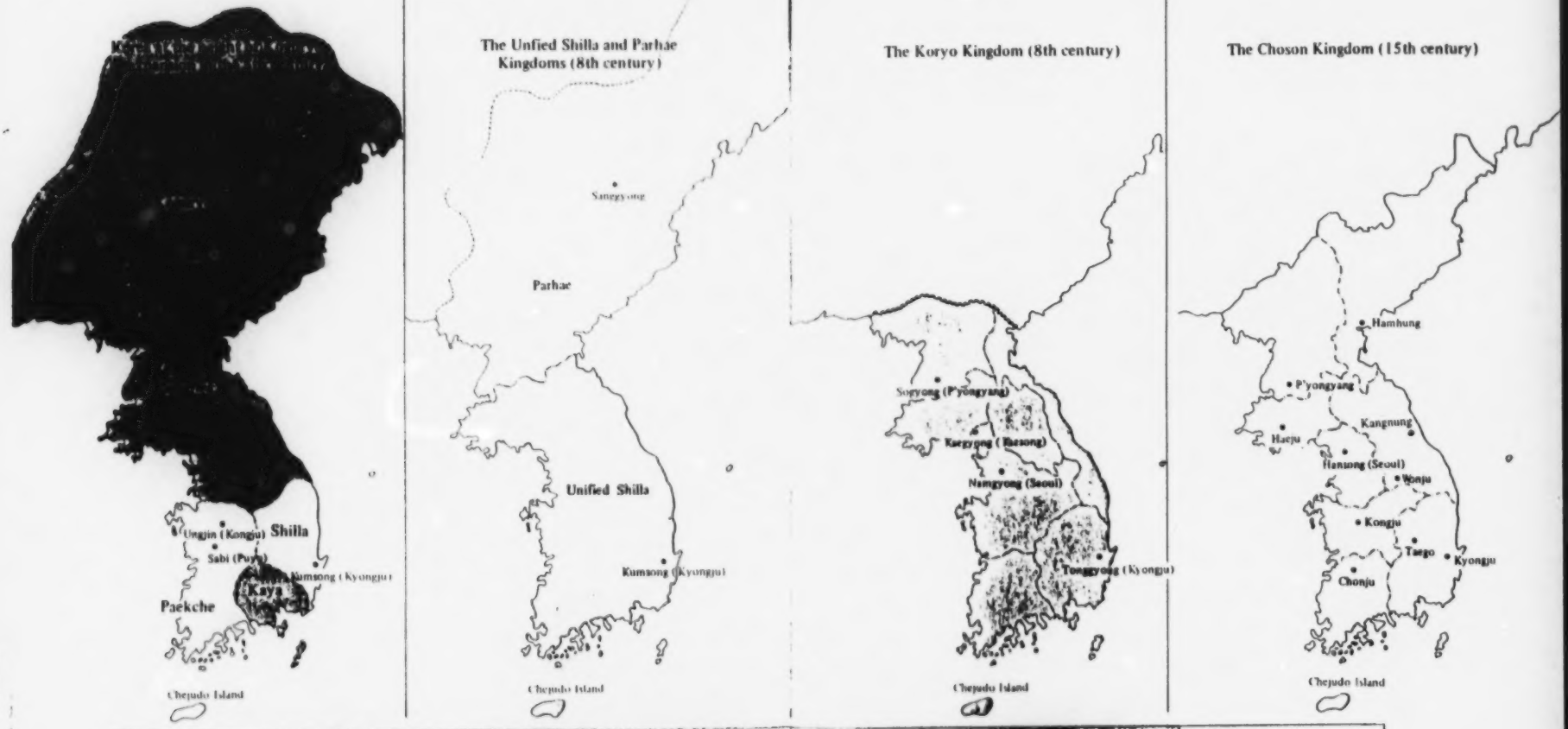


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# KOREA

**NEOLITHIC PERIOD**

Bronze Age

Iron Age

**THREE KINGDOMS PERIOD**
(57 B.C.-A.D. 668)

| Old Silla | Koguryŏ | Paekche |
|---|---|---|
| | 372 Buddhism in Koguryo | 384 Buddhism arrives in Paekche |
| 500 Buddhism official religion of Silla | 5th-[illegible] c. Tomb paintings | |

A.D. 668

**UNIFIED SILLA DYNASTY**
(668-918)

918

**KORYŎ DYNASTY**
(918-1392)

1231-1239 Mongol invasions
1234 First movable type
1300 Rise of Confucianism

1392

**CHOSŎN DYNASTY**
(1392-1910)

1443 Invention of hangul, Korean alphabet by King Sejong
1592 Japan invasion under Hideyoshi
1627 First Manchu invasion
1636 Second Manchu invasion
1700 Rise of genre painting
1795 Christianity introduced
1800 Beginning of Western influence

1910

**MODERN PERIOD**
(1910-Present)

**CHRONOLOGY OF KOREA**
ca. 4000 B.C.-Present

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# PROFUSION of COLOR:
## Korean Costumes and Wrapping Cloths of the Chosŏn Dynasty

# SLIDE LIST

1. Ladies on Ponies
   Detail from album leaf
   "Young People's Outing"
   Sin Yun-bok (1758-?)
   Kansong Museum, Seoul, Korea

2. *Hanbok*:
   *Ch'ima* (skirt) and
   *Chŏgori* (woman's jacket or blouse)
   Silk (*sa*) with self-patterned design, yellow, red, and maroon
   19th century cat # 4 & 5

3. *Mubok*
   (Shaman's robe and long vest)
   a. Robe: silk (*sa*), green and red, 129 x 147 cm
   b. Long vest: silk moire (*sa*) black, 220 x 122 cm
   19th century cat # 8 a-b

4a. *Hwarrot* (bridal robe) [front]
   Silk (*tan*) embroidered with floral, bird and character designs
   red, blue, yellow, pink, and white
   113 x 146 cm cat # 2
   18th century

4b. *Hwarrot* (bridal robe) [back]

5. Queen's *Su Po*
   (embroidered wrapping cloth)
   Silk (*tan*) embroidered with bird and flower designs
   82 x 93cm cat # 11
   17th century

6. *Yedan Su Po* (embroidered wrapping cloth for gifts by the bride's family to the groom's family)
   Silk (*tan*) embroidered with floral, cranes, and character designs
   49 x 49 cm
   18th century cat # 12

7. Pair of Folded *Su Po*
   Silk (*tan*) embroidered with abstract design

8. *Tangch'ae Po*
   Ramie (*moshi*) painted with confronting phoenixes, floral, and other auspicious patterns in red and blue
   70 x 70 cm cat # 14
   19th century

9. *Yemul Po* (wrapping cloth for gifts from the groom's parents to the bride and also for gifts exchange by the bride and groom)
   Cotton (*myŏn*) with embroidered design of pomegranate tree, cranes and other birds, butterflies, and characters for happiness
   39 x 38cm cat # 50
   19th century

10. Wooden goose wrapped in a *Kirŏgi Po*
Silk (*myŏngju*) with embroidered designs of trees, birds, flowers and pomegranates.
30 x 30 cm cat # 49
Resting on a *Yemul Po*, cotton (*myon*) embroidered with floral designs
19th century

11. *Yemul Po*
Silk (*tan* and *myŏngju*) with embroidered design of abstacted cranes, butterflies, and pomegran ate tree on a red ground
36 x 36cm cat # 48
19th century

12. Table covered with a *Sang Po* (wrapping cloth for covering food table or tray)
Silk (*tan*) with self-patterned designs and embroidery
Wooden table and brass bowls

13. *Sang Po*
Self-patterned silk (*sa* )
*Chogak Po* (patchwork wrapping cloth) regular design
48 x 48 cm cat # 25
19th century

14a. *Yedan Po*
Satin weave silk (*tan*) with self patterned design
*Chogak Po* (patchwork) with central embroidered square
56 x 56 cm cat # 43
19th century

14b. Detail of central area

15. *Norigae Po*
(wrapping cloth for small personal ornaments)
Satin weave silk (*tan*) with patch work design of triangles
41 x 41 cm cat # 42
19 century

16. *Yedan Po*
Satin weave silk patterned and unpatterned (*tan*, *hangna*, and *myŏngju*)
Patchwork design
67 x 67 cm cat # 44
19th century

17. *Oppo*
(wrapping cloth for clothing)
Self-patterned silk (*sa*)
Patchwork design
95 x 95 cm cat # 29
19th century

18. *Oppo*
Linen (*pe*) and hemp (*sambe*)
Patchwork design, black
165 x 165 cm cat # 38
18th century

19. *Yibul Po*
(wrapping cloth for bedding)
Line-patterned silk gauze (*sa*)
Irregular patchwork design
112 x 112 cm cat # 58
19th century

20. *Oppo*
Unpatterned silk (*myŏngju*)
Irregular patchwork design
85 x 85 cm cat # 60
19th century

Except where noted, all objects are from the Museum of Korean Embroidery, Soeul, Korea.

Slides 7, 10, and 12 courtesy of the Museum of Korean Embroidery.

All other slides by Kaz Tsuruta.

# PROFUSION of COLOR:
## Korean Costumes and Wrapping Cloths of the Chosŏn Dynasty

# SLIDE DESCRIPTIONS

## COSTUMES

**1. Ladies on Ponies**
Detail from album leaf "Young People's Outing"
Sin Yun-bok (1758-?)
Kansong Museum, Seoul, Korea

This detail of a rectangular album leaf shows two ladies on ponies. They wear the traditional Korean costume called *hanbok*, composed of a billowing skirt, or *ch'ima*, and jacket, or *chogori*. The pantaloons worn under the skirt are visible where one lady's skirt has bunched up. Their daintily shod feet rest in stirrups. One woman is fixing the massive coiled braid on top of her head, while the other, who has flowers in her hair, nonchalantly takes a puff of tobacco from a long thin pipe. Tobacco was introduced to Korea in the seventeenth century by the Japanese who in turn had learned of it from the Portuguese.

The *hanbok* preserves a trace of the Korean dress of the ancient Three Kingdoms period (57 B.C.-A.D. 668) as seen in wall paintings of Koguryŏ tomb. The older cross-over jacket with narrow sleeves has been shortened from ankle length to just below the breast, and it is now tied just below the neck instead of being belted at the waist.

Shin Yun-bok (1758-?) was one of the proponents of a purely Korean school of painting. For centuries, Korean painters had modeled their art on Chinese styles and critiqued it against Chinese standards. Beginning in the seventeenth century a few Korean painters explored new types of brushwork and painted local scenery towards the creation of a more national, Korean style painting. By the eighteenth century the Koreans had been introduced to Western science through Ming China and began to become interested in pursuing knowledge based on "fact and utility," not just philosophical theory. The new school of thought called Sirhak ("practical learning") challenged orthodox Confucianism and gave rise to new artistic efforts, including genre painting depicting scenes of everyday Korean life. Most unusual was the depiction of scenes with men and women together. The album from which this painting is taken shows scenes of gentlemen with *kisaeng*, or female entertainers. Shin Yun-bok painted using fine delicate lines and gentle colors to capture the spirit of the Korea he knew and loved.

**2. *Hanbok*:**
***Ch'ima* (skirt) and**
***Chŏgori* (woman's jacket or blouse)**
Silk (*sa*) with self-patterned design, yellow, red, and maroon
19th century cat # 4 & 5

This long and billowing skirt (*ch'ima*) is made of self-patterned, light-weight silk. The roundel patterns woven into the gauzy fabric, in the same color, are barely visible. When making the skirt the material was gathered at the top in a broad white band which wrapped the whole upper body, not just a belt at the waist. It was so full that women could wear it while astride a horse and still have their legs covered. Under the skirt they wore long pantaloons tied at the ankles.

Only women were involved with the weaving, cutting, and sewing of cloth during the Chosŏn dynasty. The women made all the family's clothes. In the households of the upper classes there were seamstresses to help the mistress and her daughters.

Over the skirt the women wore a short blouse or jacket (*chŏgori*). In early days, the jacket came down to the waist or further, but by the nineteenth century it had become very short, hanging barely below the width of the sleeve. Collars, cuffs, and ties were in contrasting colors.

As the jacket became shorter, the belt of the skirt was worn higher, so that it billowed out from just under the bust line and hung in an unbroken line to the ankles. The women look like they are floating along as they walk.

**3. Mubok (Shaman's robe and long vest)**
a. Robe: silk (*sa*), green and red, 129 x 147 cm
b. Long vest: silk moiré (*sa*) black, 220 x 122 cm
19th century cat # 8 a-b

This two-part garment, called a *mubok*, is composed of a long jacket and vest and was designed to be worn by a female shaman. The strong color contrasts and the mysterious beauty of the moiré pattern of the gauzy silk endow this simple garment with ritual distinction.

Both male (*paksu*) and female (*mudang*) shamans continue to practice the ancient arts of healing, of making whole, by getting in touch with the gods, nature spirits, and the spirits of the ancestors of a community through offerings, prayers, singing, and often trance dancing. The brilliant colored ritual robes, such as this one, are used to almost hypnotic effect in the whirling, jumping, and arm-waving dances that produce the trance and evoke the spirits. Sometimes many robes of different colors are worn in layers that are discarded or added during the ritual performance.

Except where noted, all objects are from the Museum of Korean Embroidery, Soeul, Korea.

Slides 7, 10, and 12 courtesy of the Museum of Korean Embroidery.

All other slides by Kaz Tsuruta.

**4a. *Hwarrot* (bridal robe) [front]**
Silk (*tan*) embroidered with floral, bird and character designs
red, blue, yellow, pink, and white colors
113 x 146 cm cat # 2
18th century

**4b. *Hwarrot* (bridal robe) [back]**

This luxurious, wide-sleeved coat is a wedding robe, a *hwarrot*, which means "flower robe." It is made of heavy silk which has been richly embroidered with flowers, birds, butterflies, and Chinese characters. The decoration is gorgeous and also auspicious; it is designed to bring good wishes and honor to the bride who wore it on her special day. Two sets of four character phrases are embroidered on the front and the back of the robe. Those on the front, *yisong chihap; paebok chiwon*, mean "the union of two families [is] the root of myriad happiness," while those on the back, *obok kujon; paeknyon tongak*, mean "complete with five blessings; happiness together [for] a hundred years." Ducks stand for fidelity and happiness in marriage, butterflies for vitality and love. The particular flowers are also symbolic wishes for long life, honor, and good fortune. The red and blue colors of the robe stand for *yin* and *yang*, dark and light, female and male, all the opposites, that, working together in balance, engender creativity and harmony.

## POJAGI FOR THE COURT

**5. Queen's *Su Po*** (embroidered wrapping cloth)
Silk (*tan*) embroidered with bird and flower designs
82 x 93 cm cat # 11
17th century

Auspicious symbols are also embroidered onto this square of silk cloth that was used to wrap or cover some special object. Korean women make many wrapping cloths, called *pojagi*, to cover, store, and wrap all manner of things. This *pojagi*, called a *su po*, which means embroidered wrapping cloth, was made for use in the palace. The naturalistic flowers, birds, and rocks are elegantly designed and carefully stitched in a conservative fashion appropriate for the royal family. Whether a queen was receiving or giving a *pojagi*, it was important that it reflect the dignity and prestige of the palace.



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**6. *Yedan Su Po***

(embroidered wrapping cloth for gifts from the bride's family to the groom's family)
Silk (*tan*) embroidered with floral, cranes, and character designs
49 x 49 cm
18th century cat #12

This *pojagi*, with its long ties, was meant to wrap and secure a precious gift. It was used by the family of a bride-to-be at the time of a betrothal to present a gift to the groom's family (to acknowledge the betrothal.) In this example from the palace, a pair of cranes, symbolizing long life, occupy the center square which is surrounded by characters bringing good wishes. When the *pojagi* was folded over the gift, the corner with the embroidered flower would be on the top flap under the ties.

**7. Pair of Folded *Su Po***

Silk (*tan*) embroidered with abstract design

Here are two examples of folded *pojagi*. They look like large tied envelopes. You can see why it can be effective for a *pojagi* to have one beautifully decorated corner.

**8. *Tangch'ae Po***

Ramie (*moshi*) painted with confronting phoenixes, floral, and other auspicious patterns in red and blue colors
70 x 70 cm cat #14
19th century

Also from the palace, comes this *pojagi* that has a hand painted decoration. Sometimes the designs were block-printed onto the cloth in ink first and then painted, but the finest, like this one, were drawn directly, without the use of a block printed pattern.

This design is regular and symmetrical. There are repeated elements left and right, top and bottom, while borders define and confine the different areas. The colors, which are limited to red, blue, and green, are distributed evenly across composition. As we learned with the wedding robe, blue and red are the colors of yin and yang, the balance of opposites, in Korean thought. Notice the way the two colors are balanced in the border of the central medallion here. Just outside this border, in the four cardinal directions the artist has drawn tiny circles divided into dark and light halves by an S-curved line. This is the *t'ae guk*, symbol of the dynamic balance of these opposites.

What other symbols do we see in this formal decoration? The two confronting phoenixes in the middle symbolize wisdom and good fortune. The smaller circles contain abbreviated and stylized forms of the Chinese character for long life. The flowers, lotuses or peonies, represent long life, good fortune, and honor. The fungi (mushrooms) in the large circles also stand for long life. Colorful but reserved, lively in drawing but tightly organized, this palace piece was designed for dignified palace use.

## POJAGI BY AND FOR COMMONERS

**9. *Yemul Po***

(wrapping cloth for gifts from the groom's parents to the bride and also for gifts exchanged between the bride and groom)
Cotton (*myŏn*) with embroidered design of pomegranate tree, cranes and other birds, butterflies, and characters for happiness
39 x 38 cm cat #50
19th century

On this pojagi again we see two birds, cranes, in the center, but aside from that how different it is from the others we have seen. The artist depicts flowers, birds, butterflies, and a fruiting tree in joyous abandon. The embroidery is stitched in many colors. Notice how the colors are used; every bird and butterfly, and even the fruit tree and its leaves, displays its own little rainbow of hues.

This happy *pojagi* is of a type called a *yemul po,* which was designed to wrap gifts from the groom's family to the bride's family at the time of betrothal. It enclosed a letter to the bride's parents and a gift of fabric, usually silk, for the bride. *Yemul po* were also used for gifts exchanged between the bride and groom. Their embroidered designs were full of symbols for happiness, abundance, vitality and long life. Trees of pomegranates, a fruit composed of tightly packed juice-covered seeds, brought special wishes for abundance and the birth of sons. Cranes symbolize long life; butterflies, joy and vitality. Birds in general signify happiness. The characters in the center mean "happiness and heaven."

**10. Wooden Goose Wrapped in a *Kirŏgi Po***

Silk (*myŏngju*) with embroidered designs of trees, birds, flowers and pomegranates.
30 x 30 cm cat # 49
19th century
Resting on a *Yemul Po*, cotton (*myŏn*) with embroidered with floral designs

Weddings were very important social and ritual events in Korean society. As part of the marriage ceremony, the groom's family presented the bride's family with a symbolic wooden goose, symbolizing fidelity, wrapped in a richly embroidered pojagi.

*Kirŏgi po* were embroidered on silk or cotton with designs which contained many of the same symbols as the *yemul po*. Pomegranate trees again appear. There are also strands of multicolored threads which refer to rice stalks and signify wishes for wealth and abundance. Some of these threads are also draped over the bill of the goose. This very simple abstract goose, with its colorful wrapper, was placed on the wedding table as part of the ceremonial offerings.

**11. *Yemul Po***

Silk (*tan* and *myŏngju*) with embroidered design of abstracted cranes, butterflies, and pomegranate tree on a red ground
19th century
36 x 36 cm  cat #48

The freedom of the Korean aesthetic is amply seen in this joyous example of a *yemul po*. Red and blue, the colors of male and female, together signifying harmony, are appropriately featured on this wrapping cloth for gifts in celebration of a betrothal. Like the others, it is embroidered with wishes for happiness and good fortune. The three larger cranes form the strongest accents of mass, perched on top of and between the two parallel pomegranate trees. Smaller cranes sit lower down on the branches. Leaves, flowers, and fruit sprout from the trunks and branches. In their coloring, these elements exhibit the delightful Korean disregard for naturalism. It's stripes all over! The various butterflies exhibit the same artistic use of arbitrary colors and patterns.

**12. Table covered with a *Sang Po*** (wrapping cloth for covering a food table or tray)

Silk (*tan*) with self-patterned designs and embroidery
Wooden table and brass bowls

One group of *pojagi*, called *sang po*, were designed to be placed over food tables or trays. In winter padded ones, like this, were used to keep the food warm. In summer thin ones looked and felt cool over the cold dishes. These *sang po* are almost always square and 16-20 inches on a side. There is a small loop or knob in the center with which to pick it up. Sometimes, as here, there are also ties on the corners which fasten it to the tray.

The food was brought into the man's quarters on food trays or tables like this one. It was just the right height for eating while sitting on the *ondol* floor (a raised area heated from below). Depending on circumstances, such as whether or not there was company, the husband would join his wife in the inner rooms for meals. Notice the shiny brass bowls. Metal utensils are preferred in Korea, a reminder of their nomadic ancestry.

These primarily utilitarian po*jagi* are constructed from pieces of material saved from making clothing. Under Confucianism, Korean women were encouraged to be frugal and resourceful. Making colorful patchwork *pojagi* was a way they could be creative, make and use beautiful things, and not be wasteful. Creating *sang po*, the women preferred centered, geometric designs. They were especially creative experimenting with all kinds of patterns utilizing squares. Here the design is of concentric squares, featuring the favorite colors of red and blue. The central square is embellished with embroidery and a pompom style knob for lifting.

**13. *Sang Po***
Self-patterned silk (*sa*)
*Chogak Po* (patchwork wrapping cloth) regular design
48 x 48 cm cat #25
19th century

This *sang po* was pieced together from pink, green, white, and blue squares. The design is made up of small and large squares arranged in two rings of four squares, and a three by three central area. The design is very simple, yet lively, due to the particular choice and arrangement of colors. The darker bright green squares contrast with the other lighter colors and placed in the corners of the diminishing concentric rings of squares, form strong diagonal lines. The paler pink, cream, white and light blue squares present both a static, cross-like form and rotating arms.

Typically, the lifting loop is of a new but harmonious color and is fastened with a bat-shaped knot.

**14a. *Yedan Po* (wrapping cloth for gifts by the bride's family to the groom's family)**
Satin weave silk (*tan*) with self-patterned design
*Chogak Po* (patchwork) with central embroidered square
19th century
56 x 56 cm cat #43

**14b. Detail of central area**

This *pojagi*, designed to wrap a wedding gift, combines a patchwork design of squares with a central area of embroidery and corners decorated with a bi-colored appliqués. The artist chose a palette of varied colors; dark and light, bright and dim, warm and cool, to create her balanced and swirling composition. By placing more reds in one axis, more blacks in the other, one quadrant rich in blue and another heavy in yellow, she has kept our eye moving around the surface. Even the center panel does not arrest our attention being pale in tone and of broken tonalities itself.

In the detail, you can see the luminous quality of the satin, self-patterned (damask) squares that were used for the body of the design. The densely figured panel of embroidery displays a pot of luxuriantly blooming lotuses and other flowers surrounded by butterflies and bees. The gift that was wrapped in this pojagi was blessed with many wishes for happiness and good fortune in the upcoming marriage.

**15.** ***Norigae Po*** (wrapping cloth for small personal ornaments)
Satin weave silk (*tan*) with patchwork design of triangles
41 x 41 cm cat # 42
19 century

Some smaller *pojagi* were made to hold personal items of adornment, called *norigae*. Korean women and their dresses were embellished with a unique form of jewelry where the semi-precious stone, such as jade, or metal-work ornament were embedded in an elegantly knotted and tasseled mounting. These fairly large pieces were folded and tied into the protective wrapper. Smaller ones were sometimes placed in little patchwork or embroidered bags first. This example of a *norigae po* is designed with a patchwork of triangles bordered by a wide ribbon with characters for double happiness and long life woven into it. Perhaps it was a wedding gift holding heirloom jewelry from a mother to her daughter.

The dynamic design balances the colors in a way to create both movement and repose. What at first looks quite loose and free is on closer examination a very systematically ordered pattern. The triangles of various colors were first sewn into bicolor squares which were then arranged in diagonal rows of like squares, giving the whole design a strong diagonal thrust. Diagonal lines of dissimilar squares made of four different colored triangles can also pop out, while the horizontal/vertical axes are very weak.

**16.** ***Yedan Po***
Satin weave silk patterned and unpatterned (*tan*, *hangna*, and *myŏngju*)
Patchwork design
67 x 67 cm cat # 44
19th century

This slightly larger *pojagi*, a little more than 2 feet on a side, is another wrapper for wedding or betrothal gifts. This one, however, has not been embroidered but is pure patchwork of multiple small triangles. Red and pink, which are the most auspicious colors in Korea, figure strongly in many of the wedding *pojagi*. Blue is also important and there are many blue triangles here also. Notice the informal and not altogether equal bands of red and blue on the border. Do you recall what they symbolized?

To create this lively design, the artist again appears of have first sewn two different colored triangles together forming small squares. Four of these were then joined together with their diagonals pointing into the center to create larger multicolored squares with a pinwheel pattern. Because the pieces are not all of uniform sizes, when these blocks were joined they formed continuous seams in only one direction. This, plus the evenly, but irregularly distributed colors, keeps the pattern in a constant state of movement. Looking for some repose, the eye lights momentarily on a square of two, four, or eight triangles. Notice also all the different patterns on the textile pieces. They add another dimension of interest and liveliness.

**17.** ***Oppo*** (wrapping cloth for clothing)
Self-patterned silk (*sa*)
Patchwork design
95 x 95 cm cat # 29
19th century

One group of *pojagi* was intended specifically for wrapping clothing, bedding, and textiles. These patchwork *pojagi* were constructed of airy, unlined, gauzy material in order to allow the cloth to breathe while covered.

This exquisite example is made up of small rectangles of white and bright colored patterned thin silks arranged in an lively, balanced, asymmetrical composition, that reminds some students of modern Western art of the paintings of Piet Mondrian. The grid of horizontal and vertical lines, created by the rectangular pieces, seldom cuts all the way across the composition. Rather, the whole is constructed of irregularly sized blocks made up of several smaller units. Groups of these blocks which are of equal width are joined together to make larger masses adjoined by other groups of blocks of different dimensions. Repetition and variety, in the color, pattern, and proportion of the single units, create the combined sense of order and freedom.

**18.** ***Oppo***
Linen (*pe*) and hemp (*sambe*)
Patchwork design, black
165 x 165 cm cat # 38
18th century

This large *pojagi* for covering bedding is made of the tough fibers of linen (*pe*) and hemp (*sambe*) in an open gauze weave. In designing this cloth, the artist has worked almost entirely with form and line, to the exclusion of color. As in a black-and-white photograph or ink painting, coloristic interest is found in the gradation of light and dark, in this case the blue-black dye; darker shades recede and the paler shades come forward. Again, the composition is formed by groupings of the individual units into rows. Although the pattern is essentially made up of rectangles aligned in one direction there is a lovely subtle rhythm created by repetition, expansion and contraction and the occasional piece placed at cross-purposes to the rest. The artist introduces a sense of movement by combining trapezoidal and triangular pieces and arranging them so the ensuing diagonal lines point one way or the other. The even border composed of mostly single strips for each side neatly frames the design.

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**19.** ***Yibul Po*** (wrapping cloth for bedding)
Line-patterned silk gauze (*sa*)
Irregular patchwork design
112 x 112 cm cat #58
19th century

The patches used to create this large bedding cover are all of the same line-patterned silk gauze (*sa*) but in different colors. Here we see a design similar to the last with rectangles, trapezoids, and triangle patches of various sizes joined together in bands of different widths. The wide border on three sides, made up of mostly rectangular pieces placed perpendicular to the edge, produces a very different effect, however. The artist used mostly strongly contrasting colors—the primary colors of red, blue, and yellow plus green and white (with some variations in tint and shade)—to create the kind of composition that Joseph Itten, an early twentieth century color theorist might call "tonic vigorous, and decided" (Itten, 33). The seamstress enhanced the sense of movement by great variety in patch size and the pulsating thrusts of the short diagonals. The numerous small pieces introduced in surprising places keep the eye busy darting around the surface.

**20.** ***Oppo***
Unpatterned silk (*myŏngju*)
Irregular patchwork design
85 x 85 cm cat #60
19th century

Unlike most clothing covers, this one has been constructed of fine, but not open-weave, hand-loomed silk (*myŏngju*). The artist has been very free and creative in her design, using a great variety of color and size in her pieces. There are squares, rectangles, trapezoids, triangles and even L-shaped pieces, both large and small, verticals and horizontals, in this daring composition. The colors, too, exhibit an interesting range of mostly secondary, tertiary, and grayed hues. Fuchsia and old gold predominate with large areas of each, accented by black, orchid and magenta, indigo and royal blues, blue-green, yellow-green, and maroon. As the eye seeks repose it comes across a small golden square that is almost but not quite centered, and nearby a bright white bit that pops out, demanding attention.